

# Welcome to Country or Acknowledgement of Country

## Welcome to Country

Only Traditional Owners/Custodians of the land on which the event takes place can deliver a **Welcome to Country**.

To arrange a Welcome to Country in your area, contact our [Regional Network](#) office nearest you. They can provide contact details for a Traditional Owner/Custodian.

## Acknowledgement of Country

If a Traditional Owner is not available to do a Welcome to Country, an Acknowledgement of Country can be delivered instead.

### When

An Acknowledgement of Country is usually delivered as part of Welcome and Housekeeping at meetings and events.

It should be delivered at significant/large internal meetings or meetings with external participants e.g. branch meetings, inter-departmental meetings etc.

### What

There are three types of **Acknowledgement of Country**:

**Generic** — this should be used if you don't know the name of the people on whose land you are gathered, or if there are disputes about the land (multiple Aboriginal peoples identify as Traditional Custodians for that area). The words are:

'I begin today by acknowledging the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we <gather/meet> today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.'

**Specific** — this should be used where there are no disputes and you know the name of the people on whose land you are gathered. The words are:

'I begin today by acknowledging the <insert name of people here (e.g. Ngunnawal)> people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we <gather/meet> today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.'

**General (Australia wide – webinar / website / printed material)** - The words are:

'In the spirit of reconciliation the [organisation] acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of country throughout Australia and their connections to land, sea and community. We pay our respect to their Elders past and present and extend that respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples today.'

You may also like to contact your local land council or one of our [Regional Network](#) offices for more advice about acknowledging Traditional Owners in your area.

## Advice from Reconciliation Australia

'There are no set protocols or wording for an Acknowledgement of Country, though often a statement may take the following forms.'

General: I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today. I would also like to pay my respects to Elders past and present.

Specific: I'd like to begin by acknowledging the Traditional Owners of the land on which we meet today, the (people) of the (nation) and pay my respects to Elders past and present.

**Example from [ReconciliationAustralia.org.au](https://www.reconciliationaustralia.org.au):**

Reconciliation Australia acknowledges and pays respect to the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of this nation and the continuation of cultural, spiritual and educational practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.